

Father In-law: An Everyday Life I

by Grey Bard

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Summary: In which a man comes to terms with the truth, if not the actual reality

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Rating: PG, for humor and general non-Disneyiness

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Email me (Please, please, please; bounce, bounce, bounce) at fitzrose@email.msn.com to send praise, honest criticisms, recipe requests, or photos of Blair in a kilt.

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>Father In-Law
(In which a man comes to terms with the truth, if not the actual reality.)

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Cast of Characters:

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Jim Ellison - Police detective, slight neat freak, and non-touchy feely person. A Sentinel.

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Blair Sandburg - Jim's best friend, work partner, and roommate. An anthropologist and Jim's Guide. Easily capable of talking for hours if he has to.

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Captain Simon Banks - Blair and Jim's boss and friend. Touchy about his fishing skills, and a possessor of an odd, dry sense of humor

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Frank Ellison - Jim's father, Frank is a bit of a jerk. He tends to make decisions without looking for proof first. Frank ignored his son for fifteen years because he was busy, and now wonders why Jim gets annoyed with him.

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"Come on Chief, do I have to?" Jim groaned, reluctant to leave his favorite spot on the couch. " The guy keeps his distance for over a decade, and now we suddenly have to clean up and make nice because he's coming for dinner?"

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Blair's head popped out from under the coffee table where he had been scrubbing at the remains of a soda spill he had made during the weekly poker game the night before. " Jim, he's your father. You only get one. Count 'em, Jim, one. I mean sure, he's not Mister Sensitive or anything, and no one in their right mind could put up with him 24-7, but he's still your dad." Blair said giving his reluctant friend one of those battle-of-wills staredown looks. " Besides, I have everything under -" Before he could finish, a timer went off. "The gumbo!" yipped the startled anthropologist, extricating himself from the table, and taking off for the kitchen.

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Jim looked at the stain on the carpet and shook his head, grumbling fondly. "Everything under control? Kid can't even get a spot out properly." He knelt on the floor and took up the discolored bucket and wet rag, setting to work. It was in this pose that Simon found them several minutes later.

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When Captain Banks stopped by at the loft to drop off the umbrella he had borrowed during the rainy aftermath of the poker game, he was greeted by a curious scene. Strange smells issued from the kitchen and Jim was scrubbing away industriously at a spot on the livingroom carpet. Walking over to lounge against the kitchen's door frame, Simon joked " In-laws coming, Sandburg?" "Simon!" Blair turned, startled with spoon in hand, dripping gumbo. " That is so not funny."

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"Yeah," Jim said from the livingroom, finishing his work and carrying the bucket and rag he had been using into the kitchen, absently wiping up the dripped gumbo. "Dad's coming for dinner."

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The look on their boss's face was priceless, but it quickly turned calculating. "So you mean that if I stay here long enough I can humiliate Jim in front of his 'old man' ?" he speculated.

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"Now why would you want to do a thing like that?" Sandburg asked pointedly, shoving a straggling hair behind his ear.

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"Oh, I don't know," Simon said, turning on Jim, "But a certain comment along the lines of 'I can't help it if you can't fish' made one weekend a while back comes to mind."

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"Simon! That's playing dirty; ruining one of your men's reunion with what little is left of his family. You're above that, aren't you?" admonished Sandburg. Damn, but that kid was getting protective. An image sprung to Bank's mind of the much smaller Sandburg defending his Sentinel with the gumbo spoon of doom. "Alright already, I'm leaving, I'm leaving. By the way, Galahad, here's the umbrella I borrowed yesterday." Simon laughed, tossing the umbrella at Blair, thus causing another gumbo spill. Jim firmly ushered the Captain, closing the door after their uninvited guest.

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Transferring the fresh bread out of the oven and putting the pot full of finished gumbo in it's place to keep it warm, Blair considered Simon's words. Friendships as strong as that between a Sentinel and Guide were often as long lasting as the best of marriages, so theoretically, Blair might have to put up with the senior Ellison for years to come. This would be their first meeting under anything resembling normal circumstances and he hoped that it

would come off alright.

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"Come visit us for dinner" that Sandburg boy had said. Us. Hrrmmph. Who would have thought it. Frank Ellison knew that he really wasn't the world's expert on his prodigal son, but he had always prided himself on being a good judge of men. This, however, was the last thing he would have expected. Wasn't the army supposed to beat that out of a person? Apparently not. "Don't ask, don't tell." he muttered under his breath as he ascended the stairs to the set of rooms labelled "The Loft".

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Before Frank even got a chance to knock, his son answered the door. As always, Frank was amazed at how big Jimmy had gotten.

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"Sit down, Dad" said Jimmy, as his fater began to look the place over. It was strange, but the first thing that struck him was how little it was like the house his son had grown up in. Decorated with primitive art objects and filled with unusual and savory smells from the kitchen, it would have seemed more like a place for a policeman to raid rather than live in had it not been so clean.

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" So, Dad, feeling any better" his son asked awkwardly. Frank couldn't blame him. What could be said at a time like this? It could hardly be easy. Neither was writing off a potential source of descendants, but still never mind. The older man wracked his mind for the appropriate term for the person in the next room who was putting the finishing touches on dinner. Roomate? Was spouse too strong a word? Frank didn't want to start things off on the wrong foot.....

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"I'm fine, Jimmy, thanks to you and your er that is....." his father trailed off. It seemed the man still couldn't say it. Senses, two syllables, three individual letters. Was it such a hard word? Any third grader could say it. The old man seemed so hesitant, so scared. An odd thing, because what had always struck Jim about his father was his confidence. Whether he actually proved to be right or wrong in the end, at the time the old man was always sure. What was bothering him so much, Jim wondered, is he still trying to cope with 'I fathered Superman '? Thankfully, Sandburg called them to the table. The fresh bread was hot and perfect ; snowy white in color, speckled with just enough bran for flavor. Blair had outdone himself, taking care of the awkwardness by making speech unnecessary. The bread was followed by a gumbo so hot that it steamed the elder Ellison's glasses, and was accompanied by cold fresh lemonade. The very smell of the gumbo, rich in the odors of peppers, okra, and the crayfish themselves, almost sent Jim's smell receptors into overload. With the help of this culinary background, Blair managed to steer what there was of the conversation towards the safe grounds of a virtual monologue on the history of New Orleans and the mixture of truth and fiction in the Jean Lafitte legend.

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Over coffee and the most amazing blackberry pie Jim had ever eaten, his friend again turned the conversation, this time to a mini lecture on the less gruesome aspects of voodoo.

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As the last of the coffee was drained down, Jim's father was gently shepherded out the door.

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Breathing a sigh of relief, Blair collapsed on the couch next to Jim. The dished could wait.

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"What was that, Chief?" Jim smirked, "Reconciliation by gluttony?"

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"What did you think it was?" Blair asked, smiling tiredly at his

best friend, as he picked up the remote. " I hear there's a documentary on channel twelve tonight about the feeding habits of lions. In comparison it should be restful."

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Wandering back to his car, Frank Ellison couldn't help but smile. Maybe his son hadn't done so badly after all. There wouldn't be any grandchildren coming from that direction, but God that boy could cook!

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file.